

REMARKS

1. Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 25 has been cancelled. Consequently, applicant respectfully request this rejection be withdrawn.

2. Claims 1, 4-11, 14, 21-25, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Australian Patent No. 732,999 ("Cassar") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,289,563 ("Watkins").

Claims 4-9, 11, 21, 22, 24, 25, and 31 have been cancelled. Applicant therefore respectfully request the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

With respect to claims 1, 10, and 23, applicant respectfully disagrees with the characterization of the cited prior art, and the rejection based thereon.

A claimed invention is unpatentable if the differences between it and the prior art are "such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person of ordinary skill in the art." 35 U.S.C. §103(a); *Alza Corporation v. Mylan Laboratories, Inc.*, 464 F.3d 1286, 1288 (Fed. Cir. 2006) (citing *In re Kahn*, 441 F.3d 977, 985 (Fed. Cir. 2006) and *Graham v. John Deere Co. of Kansas City*, 383 U.S. 1, 13-14 (1966)). "Most inventions arise from a combination of old elements and each element may often be found in the prior art. However, mere identification in the prior art of each element is insufficient to defeat the patentability of the combined subject matter as a whole." *In re Kahn*, 441 F.3d 977 (Fed. Cir. 2006), citing *In re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350 (Fed. Cir. 1998) "Such a combination of familiar elements according to known methods is likely to be obvious when it does no more than yield predictable results." *KSR Int'l Co. v. Teleflex, Inc.*, 127 S. Ct. 1727, 1734 (U.S. 2007) (quoting *Graham*, 383 U.S. at 15). The analysis should be made explicit. "[R]ejections on obviousness grounds cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness." *In re Kahn*, 441 F.3d at 988

The Prior Art:

Cassar discloses a collar 24 that fits over the top of a blade 6. The collar comprises two panels 28, 30 connected by a center fold line 26. The collar 24 is mounted over the top edge 10 of a blade 6 with the two panels 28, 30 overlying respective faces of the blade 6. The collar includes an opening 32 for receiving a suspension loop 8 on the top edge 10 of the blade 6. Cassar does not disclose or suggest means for attaching the panels 28, 30 to a blade 6.

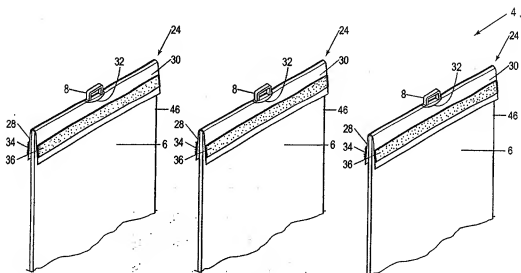


FIG 5

The two panels 28, 30 include strips 34, 36 of fastening material for fastening a curtain 42 to the collar 24, as can be seen in FIG. 6.

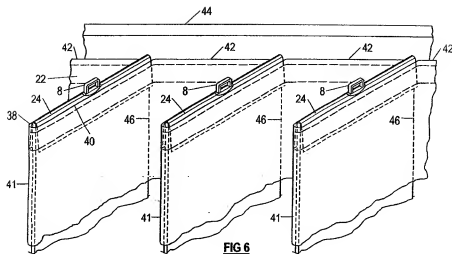


FIG 6

The collar 24 does not support the blade 6 in any way. On the contrary, the sole function of the collar 24 is to attach a curtain to the blade 6. As a result, the suspension loop 8 of the blade bears the weight of the blade 6, the collar 24, and the curtains.

Watkins discloses a vertical blind repair kit that includes a pair of pliable flaps 10A and 10B connected to one another along a fold disposed at the top edge 24 of the kit. Adhesive pads 20A, 20B attach the flaps 10A, 10B to the vertical blind slat 14. The flaps 10A, 10B are not clipped to one another. There is no disclosure or suggestion within Watkins of a means for attaching the flaps to a blind slat, which means include first and second mating portions disposed on the first and second flaps, wherein the mating portions are positioned to extend through an opening within the louvre and clip together to attach the flaps to the blind slat. In addition, the repair kit taught by Watkins does not provide means for attaching a voile.

The Present Invention:

Amended claim 1 of the present application recites a fitting that includes:

(a) a first leaf integrally connected to a second leaf by a pair of hinge sections extending between the two leaves, which hinge sections are pivotable about an axis and are separated from one another by a recess disposed in each leaf, aligned with each other;

(b) means for attaching the fitting to a louvre, which means include a first mating portion disposed on the first leaf and a second mating portion disposed on the second leaf, wherein at least one of the first mating portion and the second mating portion are positioned to extend through an opening within the louvre and which first and second mating portions clip together to attach the first and second leaves together and the fitting to the louvre;

(c) an eye disposed at a base of the recess, which eye is operable to receive the hanger; and

(d) voile attachment means for attaching a voile to the leaves of the fitting in a manner that the fitting supports the voile.

Hence, claim 1 recites a fitting having a pair of leaves that connect to one another through an aperture in the louver, which leaves include a recess in which an eye is disposed at the base thereof, and a voile attachment means.

The fitting, therefore, has structure for supporting, and is operable to support, both a louvre and a voile. As a result, the louvre does not bear the weight of both itself and the voile (e.g., curtain).

In addition, claim 1 recites that the fitting includes an eye disposed at the base of a recess formed in the leaves. The eye receives a hanger for supporting the fitting and attached louvre and voile. The position of the eye at the base of the hanger causes the eye to be hidden from view when the voile is attached, which feature is desirable for aesthetic purposes.

The present invention presents significant advantages, including a fitting that: 1) readily attaches and detaches from a louver (as opposed to the adhesive attachment of Cassar); 2) bears the load of both the louver and the voile (as opposed to the voile being supported by the louvre as in Cassar); and 3) enables the hanger connection with the fitting to be hidden from view during use (which attachment point are completely open in both Cassar and Watkins). These advantages make the present invention fitting significantly more desirable and easier to use/reuse, and not predictable in view of the cited art.

For at least the reasons provided, applicant respectfully submits that the fitting recited in claims 1, 10, and 23 is patentable over the cited references, and requests that claims 1, 10, and 23 be passed onto allowance.

3. Claims 15-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cassar in view of Watkins, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,123,471 ("Ford").

Claims 15, 16, and 19 have been cancelled. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the rejection of claims 15 and 19 be withdrawn.

Claims 17 and 18 depend from claim 1. Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner to the remarks above indicating that claim 1 is patentable over the cited prior art. For at least those reasons, applicant respectfully submits that claims 17 and 18 are patentable.

In addition, the fitting of claims 17 and 18 recite a fitting having an arrangement of elements that advantageously allows the attachment point of the fitting to a hanger to be hidden during use, and attachment means that allow the voile to be attached to both sides of the fitting.

The vane hanger disclosed by Ford does not clamp the vane. Rather, the vane is draped over cross members 30 and 32. Hence, the vane obscures a portion of the vane hanger and presents a voile/curtain to be attached to both sides of the hanger.

The combination of Cassar, Watkins, and Ford, consequently does not arrive at the presently claimed fitting.

For at least these reasons, applicants respectfully submit that claims 17 and 18 are patentable over and not obvious in view of the combination of Cassar, Watkins, and Ford. Applicant respectfully requests the rejection be withdrawn.

4. Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Cassar.

Claim 29 has been cancelled. Consequently, applicant respectfully request this rejection be withdrawn.

5. Claims 25 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,945,304 ("Kleynjans").

Claims 25 and 30 have been cancelled. Consequently, applicant respectfully request this rejection be withdrawn.

As applicants have traversed the objection and rejections raised by the Examiner, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the stated rejections, allow claims 1, 10, 17, 18, and 23, and pass the present application on to issuance. In the event the Examiner has a question regarding the present application, or would like to discuss the application, the undersigned attorney invites the Examiner to call at his convenience.

Please charge our Deposit Account No. 50-3381 for the three-month extension of time fee, as well as the Request for Continued Examination Fee, and any additional fee that may be due in the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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